

Chester Cathedral: High-level repairs (1 of 3 projects funded)

Awarded £300,000 in November 2014

The need

Chester applied for £637,465 in round 2 of the fund for high-level repairs to pinnacles and for emergency lighting. The cathedral was awarded £300,000 in September 2014 for the pinnacles work only as this was considered the more urgent of the two projects. The 2012 Quinquennial Inspection had highlighted this as a priority, and a more recent inspection by the Cathedral Architect had shown that the pinnacles were in various states of decay, some needing emergency works as they were obviously unsteady and able to be rocked by hand and vulnerable to a strong gust of wind. All have the same construction and it was the opinion of the Cathedral Architect that even those currently in a good state would, in time, decay to the same point of near-collapse. Any such fall would represent a risk to the public and would be likely to cause damage to the roof area on which it fell.

Outcomes

The building condition has been improved; the high level repairs have remedied sources of leaks in the roof which is now watertight. The cathedral has been able to host First World War commemorations.

Economic and social impact

Local contractors were used and the project provided training in stonework and leadwork.

The cathedral is now safe for visitors. It is the largest exhibition space within Chester and plays a leading role in its cultural life. In 2017 it hosted part of the world-class ARK exhibition of contemporary and modern sculpture, featuring 90 works of art by 50 celebrated sculptors, which would not have been feasible with an unsafe roof. During summer 2018 it will present the five-yearly festival of Mystery Plays.

Works completed and timescale

Works were undertaken on time and to budget. Damaged and loose pinnacles over the nave, south aisle and south transept roofs were repaired and repointed as were the cathedral tower turrets.

The Cathedral

Chester Cathedral is a Church of England Cathedral and has been the Cathedral Church of the Diocese of Chester since 1541. A church has existed at Chester since 660, and the cathedral is reputed to stand on a Roman temple site. Later a convent presided over by St Warburg, a Mercian princess, and from the 11th century a Benedictine abbey, the cathedral retains an extensive and intact set of monastic buildings including the cloister, refectory and rectangular Early English chapter house. The cathedral precinct still occupies around a quarter of the space within Chester's medieval city walls. In recent years the cathedral started the popular Cathedral at Height tours, giving visitors an opportunity to look down the full length of the choir and nave from the clerestory passage above the altar.

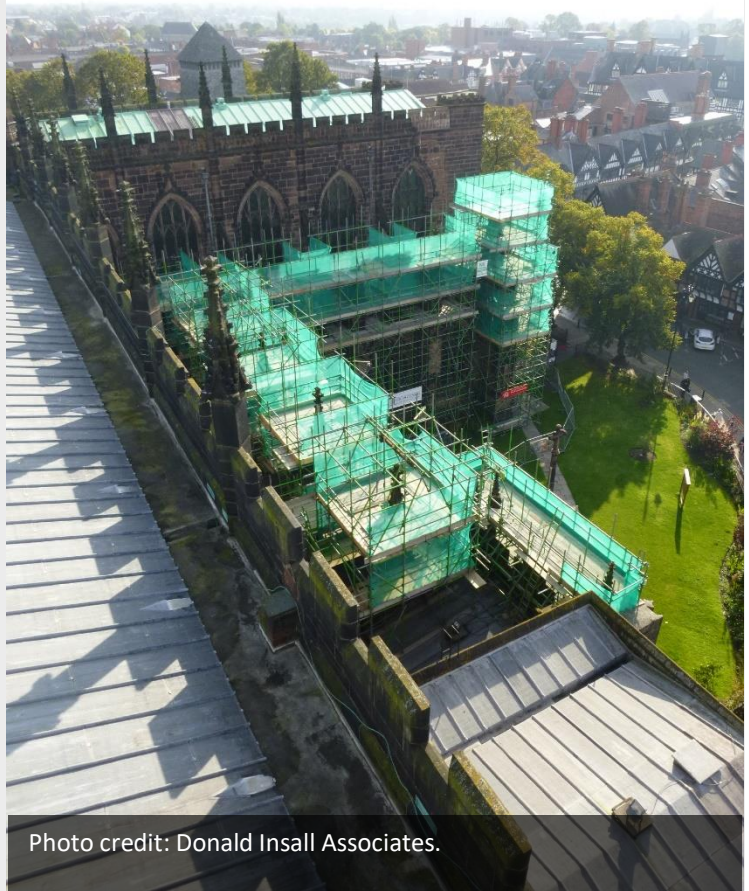


Photo credit: Donald Insall Associates.

Chester Cathedral: Cloister restoration (2 of 3 projects funded)

Awarded £274,752 in March 2015 with a further £100,000 re-allocated in August 2015

The need

Chester Cathedral's Norman cloisters form the essential interconnection between all parts of the cathedral and had last been refurbished just after the First World War. They were in a poor state of repair and required complete and sensitive conservation. Water penetration was causing significant damage to the building. The cathedral applied for £662,021 in round 3 of the fund for complete restoration, and was initially awarded £274,752 towards the roofing repair element of the work, which was considered the most urgent. A further £100,000 was re-allocated by the Fund's Expert Panel in August 2015 towards the remaining repairs, bringing the total grant to £374,752.

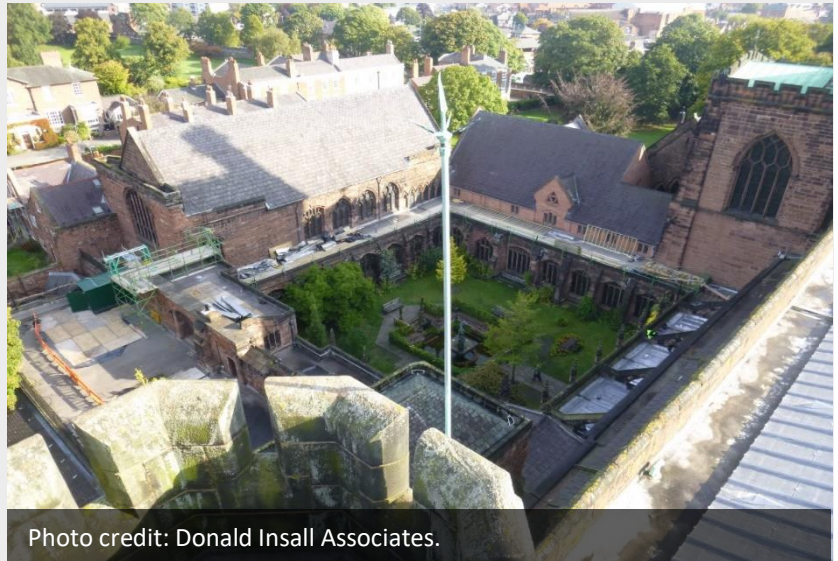


Photo credit: Donald Insall Associates.

Outcomes

The leaking cloister roof along with unsafe areas of the floor have been repaired, enabling the cathedral to continue running as usual.

Economic impact

Local contractors were used for the work.

Works completed and timescale

Failed modern standing seam roofs over all four sides of the monastic cloisters were replaced with traditionally detailed lead sheet. The other work planned was to include replacing inappropriate drainage, repointing, repairing broken flooring, repair and, where necessary, replacement of damaged glass, cleaning of stonework and an improved access ramp. Due to the shortfall in requested funding, all the flooring repairs were completed but some of the remaining work and the glazing remains to be done.



Photo credit: Donald Insall Associates.

The Cathedral

Chester Cathedral has been the Cathedral Church of the Diocese of Chester since 1541. A church has existed at Chester since 660, and the cathedral is reputed to stand on a Roman temple site. Later a convent presided over by St Warburg, a Mercian princess, and from the 11th century a Benedictine abbey, the cathedral retains an extensive and intact set of monastic buildings including the cloister, refectory and rectangular Early English chapter house. The cathedral precinct still occupies around a quarter of the space within Chester's medieval city walls. In recent years the cathedral started the popular Cathedral at Height tours, giving visitors an opportunity to look down the full length of the choir and nave from the clerestory passage above the altar.

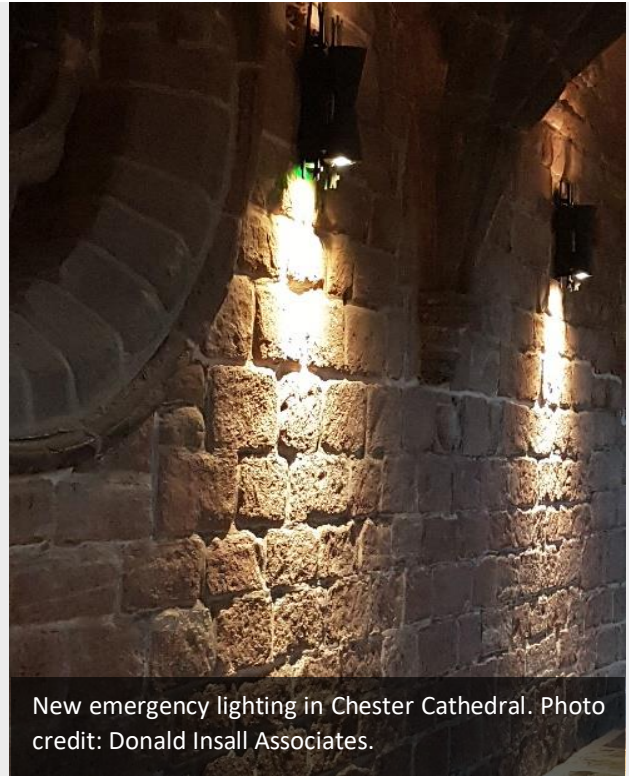
Chester Cathedral: Emergency Lighting (3 of 3 projects funded)

Awarded £120,000 in July 2016

The need

Chester Cathedral is one of the City's principal performance venues, so in addition to its services, it often hosts large gatherings for concerts and similar events. This core activity for outreach and income generation had been restricted because the Cathedral lacked any provision for emergency lighting. Should power be lost during an evening service or performance there was no safety back-up and all light within the cathedral could be extinguished. The vergers and staff had made operational arrangements to respond to this eventuality, but this did not meet acceptable standards. The need for emergency lighting was increasing as the cathedral developed more evening events and private hires to generate revenue: any premises occupied by the public require emergency lighting to allow safe evacuation in the event of power failure

Chester Cathedral applied for £845,259 in round 4 of the fund for various floor repairs, including to mosaic floors, and the installation of emergency lighting. It was awarded £120,000 in July 2016 for the emergency lighting work only. This had been part of the application for the first phase of this grant fund but was not able to be funded at that time..



New emergency lighting in Chester Cathedral. Photo credit: Donald Insall Associates.

Outcomes

The cathedral can safely run evening services, performances and other events; there was a risk that they would not be able to rely on emergency lighting and would have to stop these, making it. Without the fund it would have been particularly difficult to fundraise for lighting for the Cathedral. The lighting will now just require routine of maintenance. The cathedral staff have gained in experience in delivering large-scale projects as well as running large projects in tandem.

Economic and social impact

Local M&E contractors were used for the work.

Works completed and timescale

The Cathedral Architect commissioned a Chester-based M&E Consultant to investigate and produce options and costings. A technical solution based on a mixture of new wiring, reused circuits and maintained emergency fittings, incorporating batteries within the luminaires, was prepared, to give the Cathedral interior good levels of illumination in case of emergency and new electronic escape signage. The chosen contractor was proactive in redefining the luminaires, with the design team input, bespoke fittings were supplied, as described above, to meet the available funds, and the contract was delivered on budget and on time for the Cathedral's major ARK exhibition of modern and contemporary sculpture in 2017.

The Cathedral

Chester Cathedral has been the Cathedral Church of the Diocese of Chester since 1541. A church has existed at Chester since 660, and the cathedral is reputed to stand on a Roman temple site. Later a convent presided over by St Warburg, a Mercian princess, and from the 11th century a Benedictine abbey, the cathedral retains an extensive and intact set of monastic buildings including include the cloister, refectory and rectangular Early English chapter house. The cathedral precinct still occupies around a quarter of the space within Chester's medieval city walls. In recent years the cathedral started the popular Cathedral at Height tours, giving visitors an opportunity to look down the full length of the choir and nave from the clerestory passage above the altar.